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Operational Space- Based Crop Mapping Protocols at AAFC



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1. Introduction

Space-Based Crop Mapping at AAFC

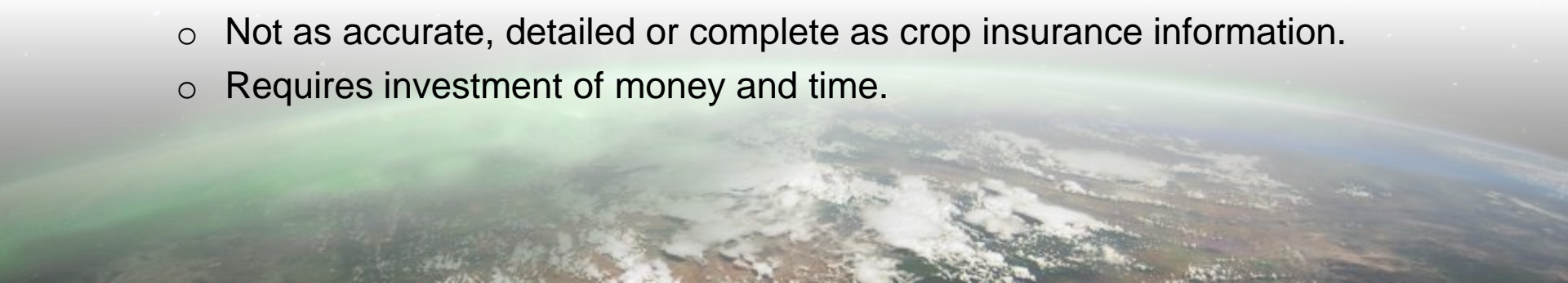
- Starting in 2009, AAFC began the process of generating annual crop type digital maps using satellite imagery.
- Mapping focused on Prairie Provinces in 2009 & 2010, but was expanded to entire agricultural extent of Canada in 2011.
- Optical multi-spectral data (Landsat, DMC, AWiFS) adequate to classify crops if data available during critical time periods.
- Although accuracies greater than 85% are achievable, they are lower if gaps in optical data collection occur.
- The use of dual-polarization with one frequency (VV and VH) improves accuracies where gaps in optical data exist.
- **Overall, integrating SAR data with an adequate national optical coverage significantly improves the accuracy of AAFC's annual crop inventory.**



2. Ground Data Collection

Ground Sampling

- Used to train classification model and validate results.
 - Derived from Crop Insurance Agencies or collected by AAFC.
 - Ancillary information useful if available (cultivar, phenology).
- a) Crop Insurance Information:
- Derived from Provincial Crop Insurance Agencies.
 - The most accurate, detailed and complete source of crop type information.
 - Bias may exist because some crops more likely to be insured than others.
- b) AAFC “Windshield Surveys”:
- Derived from AAFC field surveys.
 - Not as accurate, detailed or complete as crop insurance information.
 - Requires investment of money and time.



3. Satellite Data Collection

Satellite Data

- Successful crop identification relies on image acquisitions during key growth stages.
- Crop classification accuracies increase with multi-temporal imagery.

a) Optical Satellite Data:

- Landsat-5, -7 and -8; AWiFS; DMC; SPOT-5
- Current AAFC operations rely heavily on Landsat-8 (30m) from USGS.
- Images acquired three times during each growing season.
- Data gaps can occur in certain regions because of sustained cloud cover.

b) Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) Data:

- RADARSAT-2 (Wide beam mode W2: 150km swath; ~25m resolution).
- Integration of SAR can increase optical-based mapping accuracies by 5-15%.
- Best separation of crops uses ascending mode dual-pol (VV, VH) data.



4. Data Preparation

a) Training and Validation Data:

- Quality assurance; legend cross-walk and generalization.

b) Image Orthorectification:

- Orthorectification using satellite-specific orbit models and DEMs.

c) RADAR filtering:

- Elimination of noise in SAR data.

d) Masking Clouds and Shadow in Optical Data:

- Semi-automated cloud and shadow masking using FMASK (Boston U).

e) Masking Urban Landscapes:

- Urban masks derived from Circa 2000 AAFC LC.



5. Classification and Validation

- **Decision Tree (DT) Classification:**
 - AAFC uses Decision Tree (DT) classifiers operationally.
 - DT methods are able to handle discrete data, have higher processing speeds, are independent from the distribution of class signatures (particularly important for SAR), and are more easily interpreted.
 - Implemented in iterations that successively classifies the landscape into detailed crop classes, adds permanent classes, and post-classification filtering.
- **Accuracy Assessment (Validation):**
 - Crop mapping accuracy at the field level are evaluated using independent crop insurance and AAFC-derived windshield survey observations.
 - Low mapping accuracies require aggregation of certain detailed mapped classes.
 - Accuracies provided on a crop-specific and Province-specific basis in Metadata for final output products.

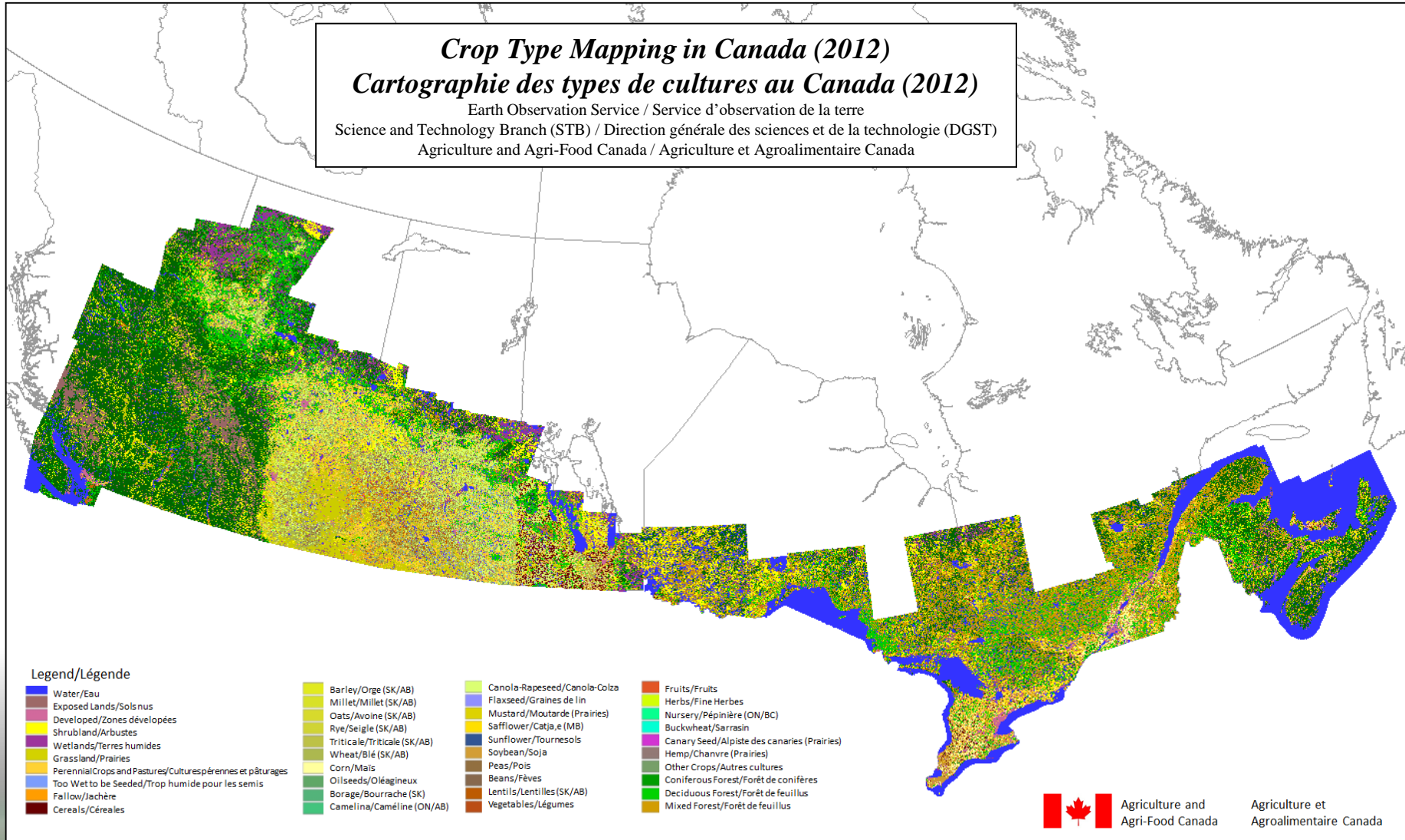
Data published through <http://data.gc.ca/>



6. Publication (data.gc.ca)

Crop Type Mapping in Canada (2012) *Cartographie des types de cultures au Canada (2012)*

Earth Observation Service / Service d'observation de la terre
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